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ABSTRACT

Chicago's Local School Councils (LSCs) are the key to successful school reform efforts. Among the numerous decisions that LSCs make that have major effects on schools are the selection of a principal, the adoption of a school improvement plan, and the approving of a school's budget. Based on attendance of over 250 LSC meetings by staff of the Chicago Panel's project on Monitoring and Researching the Efforts of School Reform in Chicago, this report provides questions, answers, and illustrations in three broad areas. The first is the nature of LSC meetings and what they look like. Discussed are agendas, minutes, correspondence/announcements, reports, seating patterns and meeting places, and public participation. The next focus area is on how councils make decisions. Quorums, motions, discussion, voting, and using good information are elaborated upon. The final area is how council members contribute to their LSC and school at council meetings, outside of council meetings, in interaction with other members of the school and community, and as individuals. In each of the three broad areas, suggestions for actions are made. Appended are a list of organizations and contact numbers for training opportunities for LSCs and highlights of the Amended School Reform Act (No. PA85-1418). (RR)

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MONITORING AND RESEARCHING THE EFFECTS OF SCHOOL REFORM IN CHICAGO

Making the Most of School Reform:

Suggestions for More Effective Local School Councils

Darryl J. Ford and Susan P. Ryan
with Jesse Qualls, Sandra L. Storey,
and John Q. Easton

August 1991

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Watch for these new reports in the fall, 1991

Local School Council Meetings During the Second Year of Chicago School Reform

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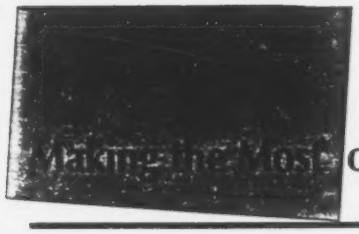


# of School Reform:

Suggestions for More Effective Local School Councils

Chicago's Local School Councils (LSCs) are the key to successful school reform efforts. By law, LSCs are responsible for evaluating and selecting a principal to serve under a four year performance contract, adopting a School Improvement Plan (SIP), and approving the school's budget. In addition to performing these tasks, local school councils make numerous other decisions that have major effects on schools.

In this report, we ask some basic questions about LSCs and portray a range of answers and illustrations. The questions, answers and illustrations come from the more than 250 council meetings that we have attended as part of the Chicago Panel's project Monitoring and Researching the Effects of School Reform in Chicago. In addition, we offer suggestions, based on what we have observed in fourteen schools for almost two years. These include suggestions about ways LSCs may want to operate to help them run more smoothly and efficiently. More efficient councils, with better run meetings, are better equipped to deal with the many challenges associated with making a real impact on school improvement. Most LSC members we observed are dedicated to making schools better for their children. Some simple procedures may make it easier to concentrate on the important choices needed to improve schools.

We hope that the range of questions, answers, and illustrations contained in this report will be helpful to current local school council members and to the new members who will be elected in October, 1991.

I. WHAT DO LSC MEETINGS LOOK LIKE?

Most LSC meetings share common features such as having written agendas, minutes, announcements and

reports. Where councils differ is in how they combine these different ingredients to create a meeting. Council meetings even begin differently from one school to another. Six of our fourteen LSCs have council members and audience members sign in at meetings. This helps them to keep a record of attendance over a long period of time. Three councils typically begin their meetings with a formal opening exercise—a moment of silence, the pledge of allegiance, or another symbol of their common goals.

Agendas. Most councils make written agendas available to LSC members and to audience members for each meeting. However, a few LSCs have conducted meetings without distributing agendas. Audience members clearly prefer to be included by knowing the agenda, even when it is simply printed on a chalkboard or poster pad.

Although LSCs could usually cover all the items on their agenda, some meetings had unrealistically long agendas. Councils handled this by either skipping sections or rushing through the items at the end of the agenda, tabling remaining items or calling a special meeting. The principal or the LSC chairperson usually assumed the responsibility for keeping the council on track. More efficient councils steered discussion toward important agenda items in order to keep from spending too much time on less important items.

Consider these suggestions:

- Post agendas in a public place prior to the meeting date
- Make agendas specific so that people will know what will be discussed
- Make agendas available to attenders as well as LSC members
- Provide translated copies of agendas when necessary
- Make agendas long enough to cover the business at hand, but short enough to keep LSC members and guests interested

Local School Council Meeting

January 16, 1991

1. Call to order/Roll call
2. Approve minutes of December 12 meeting
3. Correspondence
   A. Letter on asbestos removal
   B. New dropout study
4. Public presentation
5. LSC Chairperson report
6. Principal report
   A. After school reading program
   B. Corporate grant proposal
   C. School membership trends
7. Other reports
   A. PPAC on reading program
   B. SIP update on reading
   C. Parent Club
8. New science labs
9. New business

SAMPLE AGENDA

Minutes. All LSCs must take minutes of meetings to serve as an official record of what discussions take place and what decisions are made at LSC meetings. Minutes from previous meetings are typed or hand written to be distributed to council members at or before later meetings. Some councils read minutes, aloud or silently, during the meeting. More efficient councils have minutes available ahead of time so that members do not have to spend time during the LSC meeting reading minutes. Usually, councils go on record as having approved the minutes from previous meetings. Sometimes this requires correcting the minutes so that they are more accurate.

The amount of detail in the minutes varies greatly among the councils that we observe. More thorough minutes include attendance, date, place, starting time and ending time, motions and votes, and details of discussion and main contributors. In contrast, other minutes are sparse, highlighting only some of the topics discussed. When the minutes are complete, they are less likely to be

misunderstood and less likely to need correction. Good and complete minutes save time for councils, even though they may take more time for the secretary who writes them.

The secretary of the council plays an important role in facilitating meetings by presenting information accurately and in a timely fashion. In one school that we observe, the LSC chairperson suggested that "we need to find someone who has a gift for this kind of work" because the job is so important. Some councils make the secretary's job easier by tape recording meetings to facilitate writing minutes and allowing the secretary to participate fully in the meetings. Some LSCs made meeting minutes available for public review by posting them on a school bulletin board or keeping them in file a cabinet reserved for LSC use.

Consider these suggestions:

- Stress how important the secretary's role is in providing accurate information to the LSC
- Make minutes detailed enough to portray an accurate record of LSC business—but not so detailed as to overwhelm members
- Translate minutes into the appropriate language when necessary
- Mail minutes to LSC members before meetings so that they can read them beforehand
- Tape record meetings to make writing minutes easier and to provide a complete record if questions arise

Correspondence/Announcements. LSCs are inundated with mail. They receive announcements from Central Office, reports from organizations, requests for proposals from foundations and other types of information. Most councils place correspondence as an agenda item at the beginning of the meeting.

The most important correspondence is often photocopied for all council members. The chairperson is usually responsible for deciding what correspondence will be presented during the meeting. The chairperson can

screen the contents of letters beforehand, and highlight the most important items. In order to make sure that all members have access to all correspondence, it can be made available before, during, or after the meeting. This way, meeting time is used for only important items, but all members have access to all correspondence.

Other important information is communicated to council members by announcements. Often, both the principal and the chairperson make announcements during the meeting—either as an agenda item or more informally throughout the meeting. More successful councils present members with complete information—but they are selective and use council time for important issues only.

Consider these suggestions:

- Screen correspondence and highlight only certain important items during LSC meeting time
- Maintain a file of all LSC correspondence for members of the LSC and school community to read at their leisure

Translation. Language translation is a necessary component at meetings where council members and/or audience members do not speak English as their first language. Three schools in our study have a significant Hispanic population. However, these schools vary greatly in the amount of translation provided. One council translates most discussion. One school translates some portions of the meetings but not others. The third school provides sporadic translation at the conclusion of discussions.

The schools with more translation have higher audience attendance and considerably higher audience participation. These audience members listen attentively, ask questions and become more involved when translations occurs.

Consider these suggestions:

- Conduct your meetings in the language that LSC members and the audience understand best
- Provide accurate translation after each topic is discussed

Reports. Meetings in all fourteen of the schools that we observe include reports as a way to present information to the LSC. Principals' reports offer information about school programs and activities. Other reports stem from LSC committee work. For example, many councils have regular reports from their Principal Evaluation Committee or their Principal Selection Committee. At one school, the Ways and Means Committee of the LSC (which sponsored public meetings, a security conference, a School Improvement Plan conference, and a Teachers' Appreciation Day) reports back to the entire council regarding its activities. Some schools have a Budget Committee and a School Improvement Plan Committee which also present at LSC meetings. In most cases, reports enable LSCs to be informed of the work and progress of committees without being bogged down by too much detail.

Principal reports at meetings provide a good opportunity for the school community to hear and ask questions about what's going on in the school. At one recent meeting, the principal reported important information about the school: when cleaning would take place over the summer months, how students fared in a recent math competition, and that the school would receive an additional watchman over the weekends. The same principal aided discussion by explaining Board of Education policy on enrolling students from outside the school's attendance area. At another school, the principal always provides a summary of past school events and dates for upcoming activities, for example, a drug awareness workshop held for parents, rehabilitation plans for the building, a health fair and the school play. This principal also provided a written summary of her report in both Spanish and English.

PRINCIPAL REPORT

Committees. Local School Councils use committees to help get work done efficiently. Committees meet outside of regular LSC meeting times. They investigate issues,

read current research, compile their findings and report back to the whole LSC, often with recommendations. Councils form committees based on their school's needs. Members volunteer for committees based on their interests and experience. LSC committees often include members who are not on the council.

> *The LSC does have the power to create committees to look into things, and from that point, we gather enough information to make some decisions. That is positive in helping to develop policies. (An LSC Chairperson)*

Examples of committees include Principal Evaluation, School Improvement Plan Monitoring, and Parent Involvement. Other committees focus on curriculum, such as Writing Enrichment, Science, Math, Reading and Social Studies. Still other committees are formed on an as-needed basis to deal with pressing concerns like Principal Selection or Overcrowding.

One council that we observe has specifically designated committee chairpersons who are responsible for scheduling meetings, notifying members, setting the agenda, and reporting back to the full council. Good committee structures enable councils to spread out the work load among membets and also allow members to "specialize" in areas that interest them most.

Consider these suggestions:

- Use reports to inform the community of school activities
- Use committees to get work done outside of LSC meetings
- Designate a committee chairperson to convene and lead meetings
- Have committees report to the full council regularly on their work

Seating Patterns and Meeting Places. Generally, council members sit together at tables that permit them to be able to see and hear each other. Many councils also arrange their seats so that audience members can see and hear them. Chairs arranged in a straight line, a "U" formation, or a semi-circle permit communication among coun-

cil members and with the audience. Sitting in a circle brings the council members together, but it has the undesired effect of excluding audience members. Sitting with the audience brings LSC members closer to other parents and community members but has the negative effect of making communication within the council more difficult.

Seating patterns affect communication. So does the room itself. For example, a large room may accommodate a large turnout but makes it difficult to hear the meeting proceedings. One school that has small audiences meets in a large room. The chairperson tries to overcome this problem by urging people to move closer together.

SEATING PATTERNS

Consider these suggestions:

- Sit so that council members can see each other and face audience members—a semi-circle or U facing toward the audience seems to work best
- Meet in a comfortable room where it is easy to hear the proceedings of the meeting

Public Participation. All the Local School Councils that we observe provide some opportunity for audience members to express their concerns. Most councils have an official place on the agenda (sometimes at the beginning of the meetings, but most often towards the end) to hear the concerns of the people. One school invites public participation at the beginning of the meeting, so that atten-

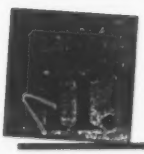
ders do not have to wait until the end of the meeting to make their comments. Several councils, however, interact with the audience throughout the entire meeting, asking audience members for advice and opinions, as well as allowing people to ask questions and raise concerns.

Councils also allow public presentations from people outside of the school. We have observed a great variety of presentations at council meetings. These include presenters discussing issues of concern and benefit to the school (for example, representatives from community organizations describing recreation programs and the park district offering an after school program). Some councils hear salespersons explaining their products (encyclopedias and incentive awards). One council heard the local alderman speak. Although relatively few people expressed their concerns during each meeting, hearing public comments is one way that LSCs are able to keep in contact with their school community.

Some presentations have been too long and others dealt with irrelevant matters. Councils should be open to outside information but have some guidelines about what is appropriate. When councils invite a speaker to a meeting, they should discuss how long the presentation will last beforehand.

Consider these suggestions:

- Invite parents and community members to express their concerns at LSC meetings
- Develop guidelines covering what is suitable for public presentations and what it not; consider time limits per speaker



HOW DO COUNCILS MAKE DECISIONS?

Councils vary in how they conduct their business. Some councils cover their agendas carefully, and follow procedures for introducing an issue, calling for a motion, discussing the motion, and then voting. Others councils work through their issues in a less structured manner. At one time or another, all councils, however, have to deal with certain matters that affect their ability to make deci-

sions. These include quorums, voting, and questions about how to proceed during the course of a meeting.

Quorums. According to the School Reform Act,

> *"A majority of the full membership of the local school council shall constitute a quorum..."*

This means that six members of the elementary LSC and seven members of the high school LSC must be present to hold an official council meeting. These many LSC members must be present even if there are vacancies on the council. Of the 253 meetings that we attended at our 14 schools, quorums were not achieved 25 times. Some LSCs that didn't have a quorum at their scheduled meeting time achieved the quorum by taking some action. For example, three councils in our sample called absent councils members on the telephone and waited for them to arrive before officially starting their meetings. This enabled these LSCs to achieve their quorums and conduct their business on the day that they had planned to meet. At another school, the council sent someone out to personally contact council members and bring them to the meeting. Although many LSC meetings were immediately canceled when no quorum was achieved, some councils reacted differently. At one meeting where only three LSC members appeared, for example, the council heard the public concerns from audience members, but then canceled the meeting. Some councils held informal discussion when they achieved no quorum and voted later when issues required such action and a quorum was achieved. At another school, the five council members who were present discussed the entire agenda, even though they officially did not constitute a quorum. Without a quorum present, councils cannot vote.

Consider these suggestions:

- Call all LSC members the day before the meeting
- Send home meeting announcements with the children
- Establish a phone tree to remind members of upcoming meetings

- Post meeting dates in public places
- List LSC activities in the school newsletter

Motions. Every LSC in our study has taken votes on some items discussed at meetings. Motions are needed to define what is being decided. After a motion is made, it should be seconded before it can be discussed. If appropriate, the motion is discussed before voting. At one school, once a topic has been discussed, the person who makes the motion writes it down and passes it to the chairperson. The chairperson then reads the motion before the council votes on it. This technique seems to be very helpful for this LSC because it insures that every member understands the motion. Having the motion written down reduces the chance that members are not clear about what the motion is. At another school the LSC secretary takes great care to write down motions. Although this procedure takes additional time during meetings, it seems to eliminate potential confusion in the council.

Consider these suggestions:

- Write down all motions and read them before voting
- Allow sufficient time for discussion before voting

Discussion. Good decisions depend on good information and thoughtful discussion and consideration. Successful councils are willing to hear what their members think, even if they do not always agree. Experts on school improvement know that change is often accompanied by conflict. Conflict is not necessarily bad for a council, especially if it leads to improvement in the educational program.

> *I mean, School Reform might have brought up a lot of feelings and disagreements because it put people in different positions. So, you found a resistance. We had to go through this period of adjustment to find out where we were, who we were, and how we had to operate. It took time to do that, and it's taking time to do that—to adjust to what is expected of us as chairperson, principal, members of the team, where we are in learning these new roles. (An LSC chairperson)*

A later section of this pamphlet talks about what council members discuss at council meetings.

Voting. LSCs use several different voting techniques including voice votes, show-of-hands, and, on rare occasions, roll call votes. Most often, the roll call vote is reserved for the most important decisions, including deciding on whether to retain the school principal or selecting a new principal. No matter what technique is used, the council should be certain how each member votes on every motion. Some keep a record of how each member votes in order to avoid confusion later on.

In order for a motion to pass, the School Reform Act requires that a majority of the total number of LSC members currently serving vote in the affirmative. (This means that an elementary school council with no vacancies requires 6 votes support a motion; an elementary school council with one vacancy also needs 6 votes for a motion to pass. A high school council with no vacancies needs 7 votes to support a motion; a high school council with one vacancy needs 6 votes to support a motion.) Our observations revealed, however, that LSCs sometimes accepted motions as having passed when they received only a simple majority of affirmative votes of members present, and not a majority of the total number of LSC members then serving. By not following this requirement, LSCs are in danger of having previously passed motions overturned.

VOTES NEEDED TO PASS LSC MOTIONS

ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS			HIGH SCHOOLS		
Number of members	Number of Vacancies	Votes Needed to Pass	Number of members	Number of Vacancies	Votes Needed to Pass
11	0	6	12	0	7
10	1	6	11	1	6
9	2	5	10	2	6
8	3	5	9	3	5

Note: Voting requirements are more stringent for personnel matters and budgetary issues. See your amended school reform act for specifics.

Consider these suggestions:

- Keep a record of how council members vote
- Make sure that motions receive the legal number of votes to pass

Using Good Information. In order for LSCs to have productive discussions, to make appropriate motions, and to vote responsibly, members must seek and share high quality information. LSC committees can sometimes gather background information and analyze it prior to the full council meeting. Committee reports and invited presentations are good sources of information for the council.

Councils need to establish a free exchange of information with the principal. In the councils that we observe, decisions are better where information is available for all council members. Also, when all council members establish an atmosphere of mutual trust and seek and provide information in a fair manner, we noticed a greater tendency toward consensus.

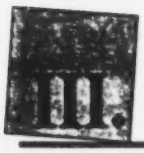
LSC members should expect to receive information from the principal, but should also recognize the enormous demands on principals' time. Council members and principals need to respect each other's role and develop an open working relationship in which information and responsibilities are shared. As one principal said,

> *One of the things about the school reform act is that it stresses a sharing of power and hopefully we will be able to illustrate that through sharing, we all have more power. We increase our ability to accomplish by sharing.*

All schools have a Professional Personnel Advisory Committee (PPAC) composed of teachers. The PPAC acts in an advisory capacity to the LSC. As one PPAC chair noted,

> *If there's a proposal made by the LSC, they'll say, 'What do the teachers think of this?' We bring that back to the PPAC, discuss it, get our recommendations, and bring them back to the LSC. So then, the parents know how the staff feels about things.*

The PPAC is a good source of information to the council and should be consulted in all important matters.



HOW DO COUNCIL MEMBERS CONTRIBUTE TO THEIR LSC AND SCHOOL?

LSC members can contribute to their councils and schools in various ways. Some members contribute by raising concerns and making decisions during LSC meetings. Others are more comfortable outside of the formal meetings, working on council committees and volunteering throughout their schools. Council members can also encourage parents and community members to become actively involved in the school. Below, we explore some of the different ways LSC members contribute to the life of their school and illustrate some of the initiatives that they have undertaken.

At Council Meetings. Council members contribute to their LSC by attending meetings and giving their input on the problems and concerns facing their schools. During council meetings, members discuss many different topics. Many of these topics concern school improvement issues like curriculum and instruction and the development of the School Improvement Plan. One LSC discussed parts of their plan at every meeting. This council devoted a great deal of its time and energy to the educational issues that are believed to be most important for school improvement.

Councils also talked about building and safety issues. One council spent several meetings discussing their school's special education program and what could be done about the inappropriate space for these classes. Some LSCs also spent time talking about personnel issues. These mostly dealt with principal evaluation and selection. Principal selection dominated the attention of one council for five months. This LSC seldom discussed any other issues during this time. Many schools dealing with the principal evaluation and selection process were, however, able to balance the many needs of the school and not allow one issue to take all of their attention.

Some councils have difficulty getting input from all LSC members. When council members are noticeably quiet on issues, the chairperson and the principal have tried to encourage members to speak up. In one school, each council member was polled to get individual opinions. At another school, the principal specifically asked one quiet member what she thought about the topic being discussed.

Consider these suggestions:

- Poll members when the council is discussing important issues (ask all members to state their thoughts on the subject)
- Ask quiet members what their opinion is
- When one council member unfairly dominates a discussion, suggests that it's time to hear from others

It is very important for council members to attend meetings and to participate in discussions. In our research, we have learned that councils with better attendance are more likely to discuss educational issues that deal with school improvement than are councils with lower attendance. One reason for this is that councils with good attendance don't have to waste time talking about bad attendance!

In an earlier report, we suggested that councils be self-reflective and ask themselves the following kinds of questions:

Is the council discussing issues that are truly important to the school and the students?

Are all members of the council participating in discussions and decision making?

Does the council need assistance or additional training? (See the end of this brochure for a list of organizations that provide training.)

Is the council mostly occupied with matters that will lead to school improvement and help students to learn more?

Consider this suggestion:

- Conduct an informal evaluation: Is the council helping the school to get better and the students to learn more?

Outside of Council Meetings. You can contribute more to your council if you know your school and its programs. The LSC chair at one school served as the "Eyes and Ears" of his council by spending many hours observing during the school day when other LSC members were at work. This chair reported back concerns about discipline, lunch room conditions, and the implementation of SIP programs. Council members elsewhere have become knowledgeable about the school environment by serving as school volunteers. This first hand experience is invaluable to councils when making decisions, especially about the school budget and School Improvement Plan.

LSC members also contribute to their councils by being responsible for duties outside of formal LSC meetings. Many members serve on committees involved in issues directly related to the LSC. These committees cover many areas, academics, discipline, and principal evaluation and selection committees. Another way that a council member can contribute is by serving as the LSC District Representative. This person informs the LSC of district and systemwide events that affect school programs and policies.

Other council members take on additional responsibilities away from meetings. People in one school often made phone calls and wrote letters, getting the entire LSC to sign in support, and consequently acquired resources for the school. As a result of these initiatives, this LSC was able to form a partnership with the Park District to run an after school activities program, procured gymnastic equipment from the Board of Education, and got a neighborhood bank to pay for the printing of the LSC newsletter which was later distributed by a local supermarket. These council members are also vocal on broader issues ranging from the school reform legislation to their support of continuing the state's income tax surcharge to fund education.

Other council members contribute to their councils by reading and learning about educational practices. All councils receive publications that describe school improvement strategies. The principal can suggest reading materials.

Consider these suggestions:

- Use committees to do background work prior to LSC meetings.
- Read articles on education. Schools receive several good, free, publications.
- Learn about "good" educational practices. What works to improve student learning?
- Get to know your school better by serving as a volunteer.

Involving other members of the school community. School Reform encourages greater parental, community, and teacher participation in schools. Elected representatives can invite and encourage others to participate in council and school affairs. LSCs can seek parents and teachers to serve on committees, such as the principal selection committee, instructional improvement committees, the School Improvement Plan monitoring committee, and school safety committees.

Many schools have long histories of active parent involvement. We have observed parents strongly influence plans to reduce overcrowding in one school. In another school, parents worked hard to try to reinstate a program which transported students from all over the city to the school. These parents worked with lawyers, contacted the Board of Education, and periodically updated the LSC on their efforts. By including other parents and teachers on committees, LSCs involve more people in school decision making and share their workload.

LSCs should look to established groups for leadership and support. Many schools have strong PTAs, Chapter One and Bilingual councils.

Consider These Suggestions:

- Invite and involve teachers and parents in your council activities.
- Foster a working relationship with your school's PPAC, PTA, and Chapter One and Bilingual councils.

Individual Initiatives. Some council members have started and worked on special projects that benefit their schools. In one school, a council member established a successful parent volunteer program. This LSC member plans a Parent Volunteer Day once a month. On this day, parents and community members are encouraged to volunteer in classrooms. Each parent volunteer receives a token of appreciation (like an apron, a two liter bottle of soda, or school supplies to give to their children), and the classroom which gets the most volunteers is awarded the "traveling banner" for this accomplishment. Volunteer Days have also had themes and students and teachers have been awarded with prizes and incentives for participating in the day's activities. This council person initiative serves both as a means to get more adults involved in the school and to recognize parental contributions.

At another school, one council member poured her energies into planning LSC sponsored events. She coordinated activities for a security conference and a recognition breakfast honoring community residents who have made extraordinary contributions to the school. Her efforts included planning the program, soliciting local businesses for donations, getting speakers, making arrangements with food service personnel, decorating the room, designing invitations, writing press releases, and recruiting students to help with hospitality. Because of her efforts, both of these events brought many people to the school and helped to strengthen the school/community ties. These individual initiatives by council members made positive contributions to their school's environment.

Consider This Suggestion:

- Take on a project that addresses one of your school's needs.

Conclusions. This brochure contains some suggestions for Local School Councils. We want to stress that they are suggestions and not absolute rules. Just as all schools are different, so are all councils different from each other. Schools have different needs, different histories, and different styles. Councils should reflect these and determine

for themselves how they can function best. Councils, however, need to follow the law as written in the School Reform Act and the amendments passed in the summer of 1991. When councils ignore the rules, they face the danger of having their actions overruled.

The purpose of School Reform is to improve schools for students. Sometimes councils get sidetracked and become too involved with procedural and other issues. We hope that this pamphlet will help councils focus on the main goal of School Reform: the improvement of educational programs for children. **Are you helping to Make the Most of School Reform?**

Training Opportunities

Training for Local School Councils is available from many organizations. **The Chicago Panel on Public School Policy and Finance** offers free training in the areas of budget, LSC elections, needs assessment, LSC operations, school improvement planning and other topics. For more information contact **Iva Lane** at 939-2202.

The Chicago Public Schools (CPS) also provides training opportunities and is another resource for information. You can call the Board of Education - Office of Reform Implementation at 535-7725.

Chicago area businesses are working with the **Training Task Force** in each of the ten elementary school districts including high schools within each elementary district. These facilitating partners help provide logistical support to councils who are seeking training in pre-election and post-election matters. For more information on the Training Task Force and the facilitating partners, contact **Bruce Cecil** of **Leadership for Quality Education** at 592- 6154.

The following are members of the **Training Task Force** who also offer training to local school councils:

Alliance for Better Chicago Schools and TRIPS, Corretta McFerren	933-0607
CPA's for the Public Interest, John Knoff	782-5170
Chicago Panel on Public School Policy and Finance, Iva Lane	939-2202
CPS-Parent Education Center, Marilyn Epps, Cheryl Bullock	535-7407
Chicago Urban League, Gail Lettman	258-5800
Citywide Coalition for School Reform, Ronald Sistrunk	592-6723
Designs for Change, Victor Montanez	922-0317
Latino Institute, Mario Garcia	663-3603
Lawyers' School Reform Advisory Project (consults on legal issues), Peggy Gordon	332-2494
United Neighborhood Organization, Madeliene Philbin	666 4445
Volunteer Network, Tom Golz	606-8240

The above list is not complete. Local School Councils may also investigate training offered by community and other organizations in their area. To obtain the **External Resource listing** of other training and resource organizations, contact **Ted Wright** of the **Chicago Board of Education** at 535-7725.

Highlights of the Amended School Reform Act

In response to the Illinois Supreme Court's declaring PA 85-1418 unconstitutional, the state legislature amended the school reform act. Your understanding of the school reform bill will help you make informed decisions about your school. While it is the responsibility of LSC members to know the school reform act and its amendments, below are listed some of the major changes in the law. This list is not complete, but serves to indicate the changes which specifically relate to Local School Councils.

- Newly elected LSCs must hold their organizational meeting by November 1,1991. The regular meeting schedule (including time and place) is to be set at this time. During this meeting, each LSC shall also select its chairperson and secretary to serve for a one year term.
- LSCs are encouraged to complete training in school budget, educational theory, and personnel selection within 90 days of the LSC election.
- High school council membership now includes a student member who is eligible to vote on all issues with the exception of principal evaluation and contract and other personnel issues.
- LSCs are encouraged to provide translation during meetings.
- LSC members who miss three consecutive regular meetings or five regular meetings in twelve months may be removed from the council. Prior to removal, the member in question must be notified at least seven days in advance of the council's vote of removal. Notification must be made in person or by certified mail, and the council member in question shall have the right to explain his/her absences. This person is eligible to vote on the question of removal.
- LSC has authority to monitor and receive reports about internal accounts.

In addition, the amended school reform act outlines the new procedures for electing Local School Council members and transferring budget line items. It also stipulates the votes required to offer a principal performance contract. Consult the school reform act and its amendments for these specifics and others issues in the law.